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AUTHOR Haberman, Martin
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ABSTRACT

Recent attempts to clarify the roles of master teacher, regular teacher, teacher assistant, teacher aide, intern, and student teacher are pointless because there has never been a clear and widely accepted definition of just what the role of the teacher is. The reason a professional teacher is needed should be the basis on which he is evaluated, and the only process for which all teachers must be held accountable is motivation. Motivation as a teacher behavior has two parts: (a) it is the demonstrated effort to elicit from students a behavioral manifestation of their need to pursue an activity, extend an idea, or experience a feeling and (b) it is not standing in the students' way once the manifestation of motivation is observed. There are various behavioral styles teachers can use to implement the function of motivation, including personal model, gadgety instruction, group pressure, reward and reinforcement, curiosity needs, newness needs, and situational pressure. Those who perform these motivational functions are engaged in professional activity regardless of their status, while those who do not manifest these competencies are not teaching regardless of their certification. The next step in the development of this approach is to analyze schemes that will free teachers to perform at least the motivational structures, and the subsequent step is to develop a progression of preparation with regard to the development of motivational competencies. (HMD)

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TEPS *Write-in Papers on Flexible Staffing Patterns* No. 5

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THE ESSENCE OF TEACHING: A BASIS FOR DIFFERENTIATING ROLES

Martin Haberman

Recent attempts to clarify the roles of master teacher, regular teacher, teacher assistant, teacher aide, parent-teacher, intern, and student teacher are pointless. Variations among schools, the people who work in them, the children and youth to be served, the nature of community expectations, and the organizational setting are only some of the less important reasons why efforts to clarify roles once and for all have been wasted.

More critical than these intervening variables which contaminate our ability to lay down clear, neat little lists of, "You do this and you do that and I do neither, unless it's Tuesday at 2:00 p.m., in which case you do that, you do this, and I do both," is the lack of clear purpose regarding what a particular school, or even a particular class within a school, or even a particular group within a particular

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class in a given school is supposed to accomplish. From such lack of clearly specified, agreed-upon purposes it is a short hop, skip, and jump to not being able to develop neat functions.

The ultimate reason, however, for our inability to work out career ladders (from dropout to state superintendent of public instruction) or the interrelationships among a range of professionals, semiprofessionals, and lay adults all working simultaneously but on different levels of competence in a variety of activities is that there has never been a clear and widely accepted definition of just what the role of the teacher is.

Many responsibilities performed by teachers are clearly instructional (e.g., explaining something that leads a student to ask a more sophisticated question), while others are clearly noninstructional (e.g., transcribing a record of dental examinations). Beyond the obvious polar differences, however, is a range of traditionally performed activities which may or may not be conceived of as instructional, depending on the pedagogical philosophy or instructional style espoused by the particular teacher. Those who have engaged in the pastime of trying to draw clear delineations in functions quickly recognize that most -- almost all -- of what a teacher actually does in school can be designated "instructional" or "professional" by those teachers who claim to be "student-centered and activity-oriented." But, regardless of the range of difference in what teachers perceive their role to be, there is substantial agreement about a core of functions.

Breaking the jargon barrier may be even more difficult than defining role. Practicing teachers often conceive of their work as "getting ready, teaching, and deciding where

we go from here"; education professors who in the past used terms such as "planning, conducting activities, and evaluating" are more recently predisposed to sketch out perception cycles with arrows which trace whose stimuli bounce off whom and whose responses return counterclockwise. Highest of all flies the medical analogy which simply says, "Teaching is diagnosing, prescribing, and evaluating." ("Life is a fountain," says the Guru. Don't push the relevancy of the point; just think about the beauty and simplicity of how it strikes the ear!) In any event, most conceptions of teaching to some degree reflect reality; they also overlap in spite of their use of different terminology. Characteristically, approaches to teacher functions include assumptions regarding the nature of the teacher-student-content interaction.

At the center of what the teacher does, regardless of the particular formulation, are some common, critical functions. At this point it is less important to be concerned with the preparation of teachers to perform these functions or the researcher's ability to evaluate them than it is to agree in principle that there exists a pith of teacher performance. The following formulation of this essence of teaching is offered with the hope of initiating a search for a limited rather than an all-inclusive definition; that is, a specific but limited conception which can secure widespread consensus. What many would see as a (if not *the*) basic function of teaching seems to me to be a better basis for planning role differentiation than a wide array of disconnected duties which are never rank-ordered for importance in qualitative terms.

The reason a professional teacher is needed should be the basis on which he is evaluated, and the only process for which all teachers must be held accountable is motivation.

Motivation as a teacher behavior has two parts: first, it is the demonstrated effort to elicit from students a behavioral manifestation of their need to pursue an activity, extend an idea, or experience a feeling; second, it is not standing in their light. When students already see value in an activity, the second phase becomes even more critical than the first--and infinitely more difficult for teachers to implement. In this formulation, therefore, the ultimate teacher behavior is absence in response to independent student activity--an objective seldom fulfilled in a lifetime but which can be demonstrated in ever-increasing amounts during a twelve-year period. Rational authority is self-eliminating; when such authority activates people to take action in their own behalf, it becomes effective instruction.

The seven examples which follow are behavioral styles which teachers can use to implement the function of motivation. They are neither mutually exclusive categories nor an exhaustive list.

PERSONAL MODEL

Demonstrating by one's own actions is a most powerful form of eliciting similar responses. Teachers who constantly carry books they are reading and who use free time, study periods, and library periods to read them can have an important impact on pupils' willingness to read. An eager, enthusiastic adult can motivate activity in every area of subject matter and personal development. Initially, these behaviors are totally extrinsic as the teacher engages in making himself a significant other whom the pupil will seek to please. But as the model demonstrates his own interests, drive, concern, and pleasure, the pupil catches on to the

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intrinsic values of an activity. This dynamic, whereby extrinsic needs become internalized, is best demonstrated in the pupil's self-selected and independent activities.

GADGETERIAL SEDUCTION

Children and youth cannot resist something that moves, unless it is something that also lights up, in which case it can be topped only by something that moves, lights up, and makes noise. No learning machine has demonstrated more than we already know by recalling our own behavior in five-and-ten stores as children.

Teacher behaviors in this realm are esentially those of collector, tinkerer, and repairman. The teacher behavior involves handling materials from the simplest rag to the most complex device until students literally scream, "It's *my* turn!"--to handle a texture, spin a dial, or push a button. What better objective of instruction than, "Let *me* do it!"?

GROUP PRESS

Teachers teach groups and individuals who perceive themselves as members of groups. Much of the professional writing (and schema-paradigm-model building) which describes teacher-pupil interaction is irrelevant because it fails to take account of the numerous responses students make in concert or perceive themselves to be making before their peers. Group commitment and identity controls not only perceptions but real behaviors.

Much of the useful literature in adolescent learning and psychology emphasizes "things" which youths will and will not

do because of group pressures. Teacher behaviors can intervene in this control over individual behavior to free up responses; at other times teacher behaviors can utilize group needs to urge a student to participate in some action. What the teacher actually does to control rather than merely adjust to the facts of group life is a viable form of motivational activity.

REWARD AND REINFORCEMENT

Little has to be added to the literature on these forms of teacher activity. From unstructured, unscheduled, unsystematic comments like "good" to the use of programmed instruction, much recognition has been given to the need for teacher behavior which is supportive. A virtual mountain of evidence suggests that praise is the ultimate form of human reward and that, utilizing it maximally, almost anyone can be taught almost anything.

Beginning with totally extrinsic stimulation, students soon come to value being right, making progress, and controlling their own development. In many cases, the actual material takes on an intrinsic quality since it is reminiscent of continuous success and approval. The basic nature of this style, particularly in the early stages, is that it is entirely judgmental. Practically nothing is done without the instructor (whether in person or via machine or material) making a judgmental response. This mode of response is very characteristic of the commonly understood term that one is acting "teacherish"; i.e., no response can be proffered without the "teacher" placing a judgmental or normative value on it--all actions are good, bad, right, or wrong. The easiest way to conceive of this approach is as the antithesis of an extentialism in which being is the critical activity.

CURIOSITY NEEDS

One of the most interesting of Kohler's ape experiments reports how his animals could be conditioned to accept an opportunity to look out of the window for 5, 15, or 30 minutes as a higher form of reward than food. Curiosity is also an inherent human response; when it is not manifested, it has been repressed. Children's jokes are guessing games ("What has six legs...?"), their amusements are puzzles (building, modeling), and even their arguments are often the result of teasing problems.

An outstanding example of this form of teacher behavior was demonstrated by a ninth-grade science teacher in a disadvantaged urban area who was working with nonreading, emotionally disturbed boys. Mr. A. decided his fundamental function was to motivate the students. Without the elaborate argument we are constructing, he merely decided to exploit their natural curiosity.

Mr. A. brought in several pots of geraniums which were on the verge of flowering. He told the boys that if they did a sequence of gymnastics during their science period (push-ups, sit-ups, bends, stretches), at the end of a week the plants along the window would bloom but that they must use the whole hour and that every boy must be present to participate. The boys' response was, "You're full of ----, man!" To which Mr. A. replied, "Wouldn't you like to try to find out?" The boys took the challenge, the plants bloomed on schedule, and Mr. A. taught these "unteachables" the most fundamental principle of science--the relationship of cause and effect. He used their natural curiosity to get them involved enough so that after the plants bloomed there were comments such as, "How do we know it really happened?" (validity), "Make him do it again!" (reliability), "How

could push-ups connect with flowers?" (correlation), and "What's the gimmick?" (causality). What these boys actually learned varied in each case. Mr. A. interpreted his basic function as motivation. He behaved as if he believed that by definition all people are curious.

NEWNESS NEEDS

Closely related but clearly distinguishable from native curiosity is the need to not be bored. From the consistency of a schedule and an organized round of life comes the security to predict in advance. Adults as well as first-graders are often described as needing the sureness of action which derives from knowing what's next. Change (along with chance and choice) is described by Erik Erickson as the greatest challenge to the individual's coping skills and the highest purpose of a useful education.

It sounds quite mundane, certainly nonscholarly; nevertheless, experiential evidence leads me to believe that most people will do almost anything to break the routine everydayness of life. Somewhere between complete organization and chaos an individual seeks a balance. In teaching it is vital to establish management procedures, set routines, and make schedules. The professional teacher recognizes this as a basic prerequisite to learning; he also sees in it the opportunity to use newness, diversion, something out of the ordinary, as feeding a basic need of his pupils.

Some of the most bizarre human behaviors can validly be explained with little more than, "Well, at the time it seemed like a good idea." The simplistic nature of this dynamic may be one of the reasons it has been overlooked in analyses and underutilized in practice.

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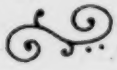
SITUATIONAL PRESS

Motivational efforts reach the ultimate in sophistication when they do not deal directly with the students. Setting up an environment where particular people and materials interact in specific ways can be used to elicit the response of wanting to get involved. The atmosphere in a library differs from that in a cafeteria or a laboratory, but within similar places (classrooms), there is a press of the situation to begin to act, feel, think in certain ways. Teaching behaviors (at times called planning, preparation, gathering materials, structuring, or even diagnosing) which establish the nature of the situational press are demonstrations that the teacher is employing a fundamental form of human motivation.



These brief sketches of teachers' motivational behaviors are intended to contend with the question: How can we define the roles of assistants and aides until we know the role of the teacher? The position is that those who perform these motivational functions are engaged in professional teaching acts regardless of their status, while those who do not manifest these competencies are not teaching, regardless of their certification.

The differentiation of functions on this basis involves some specialization; that is, different teachers are predisposed to select different forms and combinations of motivational behavior clusters. The reward-reinforcement user develops a different kind of expertise from the teacher who is concerned with structuring situational press.

More difficult, however, is the use of this formulation by persons of different ability and experience. The next step in the development of this approach is to analyze examples of how teachers, assistants, aides, parents, and others could work in concert--freeing the teacher to perform at least the motivational functions. The next phase in the analysis is to develop a progression of preparation; that is, the sequence of behaviors which moves from less difficult to more difficult motivational behaviors. Until this preliminary thinking is done, the present discussions of preparation, evaluation, and improvement of global schemes are at best premature. In the vacuum created by having no criteria for evaluating some critical teaching behaviors, there can be little expectation of dividing, let alone, improving, a "professional" role.

Martin Haberman is a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee.

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